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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 15, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1811 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: OIIP, KMDR
Captions: None
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: THREATS TO SYRIA CONTROL OF IRAQ
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01811

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: ECON POL AMB DCM
Laser1:
ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PAO:KVANDEVATE
DRAFTED: PAO:AALKHATIB
CLEARED: PAO:TPONCE

VZCZCADI449
OO RUEHC RUENAAA RUEKJCS RUEHZM RUEHLO RUEHFR
RHRMDAB RUCJACC RUCQSOC
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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 150926Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9430
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0640
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0696
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL//PA//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001811

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;
INR/NESA; INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OIIP KMDR TC
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: THREATS TO SYRIA CONTROL OF IRAQ

¶1. SUMMARY: U.S. WARNINGS TO SYRIA, U.S. CONTROL OF IRAQ, AND
TODAY'S MEETING IN NASSERIYA FOR IRAQI COMMUNITY LEADERS
DOMINATED COVERAGE IN UAE MEDIA. UAE COLUMNIST AYSHA SULTAN

WROTE IN "AL BAYAN" THAT SYRIA IS NOT THE ONLY TARGET. AN "AL ITTIHAD" EDITORIAL DESCRIBED THE IRAQI OPPOSITION MEETING AS "A TRUE TEST." END SUMMARY.

¶12. DUBAI-BASED BUSINESS-ORIENTED ARABIC DAILY "AL-BAYAN" CARRIED A FIRST PAGE ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY LONDON BASED "SAWT AL OROBA." THE ARTICLE INCLUDED A STATEMENT BY AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL ABOUT A DEAL BETWEEN U.S. FORCES AND IRAQI ARMED FORCES THAT LED TO THE FALL OF BAGHDAD. FURTHER DETAILS WERE REPORTED IN AN INTERNAL ARTICLE IN "AL BAYAN." THE ARTICLE CLAIMED THAT THE DEAL WAS CONTINGENT UPON THE BOMBING OF AL JAZEERA AND ABU DHABI TV AT THE PALESTINE HOTEL TO PROHIBIT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE DEAL.

¶13. ABU DHABI TV AIRED A TWO-HOUR PROGRAM LAST NIGHT THAT DEVOTED ONE WHOLE HOUR TO DISCUSSING THE THEORY OF OIL BEING THE MAIN OBJECTIVE FOR U.S.'S WAR AGAINST IRAQ. THE PROGRAM CORRESPONDENT JASSEM AZZAWI INTERVIEWED THE FORMER SAUDI OIL MINISTER, MOHAMMED ZAKI AL YAMANI, WHO DEEPENED THIS IDEA AND NOTED THAT HE PREDICTED THIS WAR IN 1996.

¶14. SHARJAH-BASED PAN-ARAB DAILY "AL-KHALEEJ" CARRIED THE ATTACHED CARTOON, FOR WHICH THE CAPTION READS: "DON'T MAKE A MISTAKE ... THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE ... I AM NOT LIKE HIM ... HULAGU DROWNED THE BAGHDAD LIBRARY ... I BURNED IT!!!" (NOTE: HULAGU KHAN IS THE MONGOL EMPEROR WHO SACKED AND BURNED BAGHDAD IN 1258. DURING HIS DESTRUCTION OF BAGHDAD, HULAGU ORDERED THE BOOKS OF THE BAGHDAD LIBRARY THROWN INTO THE TIGRES RIVER TO SYMBOLIZE HIS DESTRUCTION OF NOT ONLY THE CITY BUT A CULTURE, A CIVILIZATION, AND A PEOPLE'S HISTORY. END NOTE.)

¶15. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EXPATRIATE-ORIENTED GULF NEWS CARRIED FRONT-PAGE A FRENCH PRESS AGENCY (AFP) WIRE ARTICLE ON THE SELECTION OF U.S. AMBASSADOR TO MOROCCO MARGARET TUTWILER TO SUPERVISE PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF HUMANITARIAN AND RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE IN IRAQ.

¶16. COMMENTING ON THE EXPECTED IRAQI OPPOSITION MEETING TODAY IN NASSERIYA, SEMI-OFFICIAL ABU DHABI-BASED ARABIC DAILY "AL-ITTIHAD" EDITORIALIZED 4/15:

"... THIS MEETING IS A TRUE TEST FOR OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF VARIOUS LOYALTIES, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN MANY DOUBTS ARE RISING, IN ADDITION TO THEIR VARIOUS LOYALTIES, THEIR CONNECTIONS, AND THEIR ABILITY TO EXPRESS THEIR PEOPLE'S INTERESTS TRULY ... WILL THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ, WHO ARE NOT IN THE OPPOSITION ANYMORE, SUCCEED IN BECOMING A PART OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE NEW IRAQ?"

¶17. IN A CLOSING STATEMENT, SALEM WROTE IN "AL-KHALEEJ" ON 4/15:

"... WE ALL REMEMBER THE OUTCRY THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE WHOLE WORLD WHEN THE TALIBAN SOME YEARS AGO DESTROYED THE 'BUDDHA' STATUE IN AFGHANISTAN. ONE OF THE COUNTRIES THAT DISAPPROVED OF THIS WAS OF COURSE THE U.S., WHO IS CONCERNED, AS IT CLAIMS, WITH HUMANITY, CIVILIZATION, AND HERITAGE. BUT WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IN BAGHDAD, BASRA, AND MOSUL OF THE LOOTING OF MUSEUMS (INCLUDING AN INHERITANCE DATING MORE THAN 5 THOUSAND YEARS) UNDER THE EYES OF THE U.S. TROOPS, ASSERTS THAT THE U.S. IS USING HUMANITY, CIVILIZATION, AND HERITAGE AS A 'RASPBERRY LEAF' TO COVER THEIR BARBARISM." (NOTE: CERTAIN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS CLAIM RASPBERRY LEAVES WERE USED BY ADAM AND EVE TO COVER THEMSELVES UPON THE REALIZATION OF THEIR NAKEDNESS IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. END NOTE.)

¶18. RESPONDING TO U.S. WARNINGS TO SYRIA, UAE COLUMNIST AYSHA SULTAN WROTE IN "AL BAYAN" ON 4/15:

"THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S MIND IN THE ARAB WORLD IS SUMMARIZED IN THREE WORDS: WHOSE TURN IS IT? THIS MEANS THE NEXT U.S. TARGET AFTER IRAQ! THE QUESTION IS VERY CRUEL AND PAINFUL BUT THE ANSWER IS NOT AS EASY AS PEOPLE THINK. UK FOREIGN MINISTER JACK STRAW STATED THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT A LIST AND THAT SYRIA IS NOT THE NEXT TARGET. YES, THE ISSUE IS NOT A LIST BECAUSE EVERYONE IS A TARGET AND THE NEXT TARGET IS NOT ONLY SYRIA. WHAT THIS MEANS IS NOT ONLY THE REGIMES, EVERYONE IS GOING TO FACE THIS WHIRLWIND: REGIMES AND PEOPLE, FUNDAMENTALISTS AND LIBERALS, ARAB NATIONALISTS AND MUSLIMS ... EVERYONE WILL FACE THIS WHIRLWIND!!"

WAHBA